

## News, July – December 2008

### **Innocent villager tortured in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 122/2008, July 01, 2008*

**On 22 June, Lt. Tanvir, commander of Merungchara army camp, severely tortured Palash Dewan (30) s/o Chandra Lal Dewan, a resident of Kerongchari village in Belaichari under Rangamati district, sources said.**

Sources said a group of army personnel led by Lt. Tanvir raided the village of Kerongchari at about 12 noon and picked up Palash Dewan from his home alleging that he provides support to the members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).

They took him to the camp and beat him mercilessly. Afterwards, the village elders called on Lt. Tanvir in the camp and got him released in the evening.

Earlier, while in Dhupchari camp in Belaichari, Lt. Tanvir earned notoriety for torturing innocent people after stripping them naked. When the Jumma villagers complained to the higher authorities of the army about his brutality, he has been transferred to Merungchara army camp.

Nonetheless, he continues with the same practice, much to the suffering of the innocent Jumma people. Old habits diehard!

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### **One dies in army custody in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 123/2008, July 07, 2008*

**One Jumma villager has been tortured to death in army custody in Belaichari under Rangamati district, sources in Rangamati said.**

Quoting eyewitnesses, the sources said at about 6 am today, a group of military personnel from Kangarachari army camp surrounded the house of Niranjon Chakama, 40, s/o Lalit Kumar Chakma in the village of Nareychari under Kangarachari Union.

The soldiers, led by one Lieutenant and one Warrant Officer, searched the house, which also doubles as a shop, and found a copy of the Pitribhumi, a mouthpiece of the Students and Youths Against Land Aggression, and one Indian five rupee note.

The name of the army officers could not be known.

The soldiers took him to the camp and beat him mercilessly, resulting in his death.

The soldiers were reported to have been preparing to hand over his dead body to the police, the sources further said.

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## **Settlers beat up two Jummas in Babuchara**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 124/2008, July 09, 2008*

### **The settlers beat up two Jumma villagers in Babuchara under Dighinala Thana on 5 July 2008.**

According to sources, at about 11am on that day four settler leaders - Abdul Malek 38 s/o Abdul Sobhan Hawlader, his brother Abdul Salam 45, Akter Chairman 48 s/o Sattar Naj and Shariful Islam 32 s/o Abdul Matin from Babuchara - went to Sadhana Tila along with a pick-up load of police personnel.

On their way, the settlers picked up Subo Ratan Chakma 27 s/o Sharat Chandra Chakma and Bakra Chakma from a place near Sadhana Tila and asked them to tell the name of the Jummas who built houses there. When the Jummas refused to divulge anything, the settlers beat them up.

Both Subo Ratan Chakma and Bakra Chakma live in the village of Sachindra Karbari Para, Babuchara.

On 7 July, they filed two criminal cases in a court of law in Dighinala Upazila against the four settlers for inflicting grievous hurt by physical torture. Reports said the court has already served notice on the settlers to appear before the court in person.

However, The Chakmas fear that the settlers might also file a counter-case against the Jummas, including Bagan Kumar Chakma, the chief of Sadhana Tila village.

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## **Stage-managed arms recovery in North Khabangpujya, Khagrachari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 125/2008, July 09, 2008*

### **Joint forces of army and police have staged a drama of recovery of firearms in North Khabangpujya of Khagrachari town.**

Residents of North Khabangpujya said on 8 July, at about 10pm police and army personnel in four pick-up vans came to the area. After pulling up their vans near the house of Pradip Kumar Chakma, 47 on Swanirbhor - Khabangpujya road, 11 army soldiers got off the vehicles and walked to an open space near his house.

They stayed there for about five minutes and then came back to where the vehicles were standing. Afterwards, the soldiers picked up Pradip Kumar Chakma, a farmer and Uttom Chakma, a private tutor, from their houses.

The soldiers showed them one cartridge, one pistol, three cartridge barrels and 149 rounds of cartridge bullets, and claimed that these had been recovered from the open space near Pradip Kumar Chakma's house.

The soldiers forced them to put their sign on a blank sheet of paper and then drove away.

Pradip Chakma's wife told chtnews.com that the claim that the army had recovered arms and ammunition from their area is a sham. "This is a complete lie and nobody will buy their (army) story. Every day till late in the evening the children play games in that open space where the army claims to have recovered the arms."

Ujjal Smriti Chakma, a central committee leader of the UPDF, termed the alleged recovery of firearms as "stage-managed and a conspiracy to find false pretexts to arrest UPDF members".

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## **Torture victim Niranjan Chakma cremated**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 126/2008, July 11, 2008*

**Niranjan Chakma, who was tortured to death in army custody on 7 July in Digholchari zone, was cremated yesterday as per religious and social customs of the Chakma people.**

Mr. Chakma was picked up from his home in the village of Nareychari under Kangarachari Union by a group of army personnel led by a Warrant officer from Merangchara army camp. He was taken to the camp and tortured badly, resulting in his tragic death.

His dead body was returned to his family members on 9 July.

The identity of the Warrant Officer (previous designation was Subedar) responsible for his arrest could not be known. The Digholchari zone is commanded by Lt. Col. Sayed Md. Assaduzzaman and his second-in-command, Fakruddin.

Merangchara army camp is a base camp under Digholchari zone.

Nareychari village lies in Belaichari Upazila and is accessible only by foot at this time of the year when the water level of the Kaptai Lake reaches its lowest. At other times, the village can be reached comparatively with ease.

Hill Watch Human Rights Forum tried to interview the family members of the Niranjan Chakma at Kaptai, a town bordering Chittagong, as stepped up army operations have made a visit to the remote village highly risky.

But his family members refused to come for the interview, fearing reprisals from the army.

"They are scared out of their wits. They won't speak about the incident. They fear that any kind of interview will put their security at stake." told one of messengers whom the HWHRF sent to contact the victim's family for the interview.

A member of the HWHRF told chtnews.com quoting their messengers that the dead body was cremated yesterday (10 July) and that the bones and ashes of the burned body were to be thrown out into the water early in the morning today according to their social customs.

It was not known whether post mortem was conducted before cremation.

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## **Yet another Jumma tortured to death in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 127/2008, July 11, 2008*

**Another Jumma villager was reported to have been tortured to death in Belaichari under Rangamati district on 9 July.**

This comes two days after the death of Niranjan Chakma on 7 July in military custody in the same area.

Reports reaching from the area said a group of military personnel from Digholchari zone located at Belaichari Upazila (sub-district) town on 8 July raided the village of Mashkaba Chara. The village is about 3 miles south of the Upazila headquarters.

The soldiers severely tortured three innocent people in the village before going back to their camp. The identity of the victims could not be known.

After the army personnel had left, the villagers took the torture victims to Belaichari Upazila Health Complex Hospital in serious conditions. But the hospital authorities refused to admit them on the ground that they lacked adequate treatment facilities.

Instead, the hospital authorities referred the victims to Chandraghona Hospital, where one of them died the following day, ie, 9 July. Chandraghona is two and a half hours journey - half by launch and half by bus - from Belaichari via Kaptai.

His dead body was brought back to the village on 10 July. The other two victims are reportedly still in deep coma.

Latest information gleaned from the area said after the death of one of the victims the military seized the other two victims in the hospital and are denying their relatives access to them.

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**Settler attempt to harvest in Jumma's land**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 129/2008, July 26, 2008*

**A communal riot was narrowly averted yesterday in Longudu under Rangamati district when the settlers made attempts to harvest in a Jumma villager's land.**

One source said Sagarbacha Chakma's wife in Baro Harikaba village went to harvest paddy in their land. But to her utter surprise and dismay, she found that some settlers from Bhaibone Chara had been cutting paddy there.

She made a strong protest and chased them away wielding a dao (a kind of knife) in her hand. A settler was slightly injured when she hit him with the dao.

Thereafter, a group of 15 - 20 settlers led by Nupur Ali (s/o Elahi Box, a VDP Platoon Commander) came back to mount a reprisal attack on the Jumma people. Apparently, the retreating settlers misreported the incident to their fellow settlers and provoked them against the Jummas.

When the settlers reached a village shop, they found a large number of Jummas already assembled there, a common sight in almost every village shop in the CHT.

Unaware of the incident, the Jummas asked the settlers what they had been up to. The truth came out when they talked to each other and a mutual settlement was reached.

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## **Fresh tension over land grabbing in Sajek**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 130/2008, July 27, 2008*

**Fresh tension over land grabbing has been reported from Sajek in Baghaichari Upazila of Rangamati district where 77 Jumma houses had been burnt down in an army-settler joint attack over three months earlier, on 20 April.**

Sources said tension started brewing afresh when the settlers resumed construction of houses on Jumma people's lands over a month ago. The Jumma villagers lodged protests a number of times against the move of the settlers, but to no avail.

Frustrated by the continuous failure of the army and the civil administration to stop the illegal occupation of their lands, hundreds of Jumma villagers yesterday (26 July) between 10 a.m. to 12 noon destroyed some newly built illegal houses of the settlers at Gangaram dore.

After that, the settlers proceeded towards Jumma villages to mount an attack but they were repulsed.

However, a few minutes later they staged a come-back along with a group of army personnel.

Tension has been running high in the area since then, Ricoh Chakma, president of the Hill Student's Council, quoted a villager as saying.

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## **Attempted to rape of a Jumma girl in Rajstali**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 131/2008, July 28, 2008*

**A teenage Jumma girl is reported to have been subjected to a rape attempt by an unnamed army officer in Rajstali under Rangamati district.**

According to a source in UPDF, on 19 July, a group of army personnel led by a Warrant Officer raided the village of Magainpara under Ghilachari Union No. 3.

The army officer attempted to rape 15-year-old Ms Jika Rani Tonchongya when he found her alone in the house.

"He (army officer) asked her to cast off her dress and grabbed her", UPDF leader Soikat Chakma quoted one of her relatives as saying.

"She screamed, somehow freed herself and ran out of the house." he said.

Her father's name is late Dharon Moni Tonchongya and mother's name Mrs. Kalachogh Tonchongya.

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## **7 hurt in clash over land in Khagrachari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 132/2008, August 08, 2008*

**At least 5 Jummas and 2 Bengalis were injured in a clash over a piece of land in Chinginala under Khagrachari Pourashova (Municipality) yesterday.**

The clash erupted at about 8 in the morning when a group of 15 - 20 Bengali people led by Nazir Mian attacked the Jummas who were erecting bamboo fence around a piece of land measuring 27 decimal. The land was disputed by Nazir Mian, but after a hearing both the Deputy Commissioner and the District Council of Khagrachari adjudged the land to belong to Apru Marma and Sathoi Marma.

Eyewitnesses said the Bengalis were armed with dao (a kind of knife), axes and hokey sticks. They went on a rampage, attacking the Jummas working on the land. The attackers also smashed the fence.

The five Jummas injured in the attack have been identified as Aungyo Marma, 40, s/o Mongshey Marma, Mrachathoai Marma, 42, s/o Aphoaihey Marma, Ms Paichi Marma, 18, Ms Madhuri Marma, 20, and Suiching Marma.

Of the injured Jummas, Aungyo Marma got his left ear cut, Mrachathoai was hit in the left hand and Suiching Marma sustained injuries on the left side of his chest when he was hit with a dao.

The Jummas tried to defend themselves but they were no match for the Bengalis who were armed to the hilt. Two Bengalis were also injured. One of them has been identified as Zahir Ahmed.

After hearing the news of the attack, around 150 Jummas thronged there but by that time the attack had been done, and groups of army and police personnel had reached the spot.

The army made no arrest of the attackers but took the injured Jummas into their custody in the name of providing medical care. Many fear that they might be implicated in false cases and sent to jail.

Some of the attackers have been identified as Nazir Mian (65), Fatik (40), Munir (20), Selim (18), Mamun, Kashem and Bachaya.

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## **Two Jumma youths arrested in Dudukchara**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 133/2008, August 08, 2008*

**On 5 August, two Jumma youths were arrested in Dudukchara of Pujgang area under Panchari Thana in Khagrachari district.**

Sources said at around 1 p.m. of that day a group of Bangladesh Rifles led by Subedar Md. Azad from Dudukchara camp (38 Rifle Battalion) raided the village and arrested Tepantor Chakma, 23, of village Brazo Mohan Para and Nicholas Chakma, 20, s/o Bersingh Chakma of village Shanti Ranjan Para from a meeting of the Democratic Youth Forum.

Nicholas Chakma is the General Secretary of the DYF Shanti Ranjan Para unit while Tepantor Chakma is a student.

The members of the border security force took them to the camp, and thereafter handed them over to the Panchari police station on 6 August. The police sent them to Khagrachari jail.



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## **Jumma woman raped, her sons tortured in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 134/2008, August 10, 2008*

**A Jumma woman was reported to have been raped in Belaichari under Rangamati district on 4 August.**

UPDF sources said at around 2 p.m. on that day a group of Bangladesh army personnel led by Captain Tanvir from Merangchara camp raided the village of Down Nuopara in Belaichari Sadar. The soldiers met Ms Shanti Devi Chakma, 40, w/o Lakshmi Chakma near the village and raped her.

They also beat up her two sons -- Ranjan Chakma, 20, and Rubel Chakma, 11.

The army men searched their house, destroyed the utensils and looted away the valuables.

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## **Innocent villager tortured in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 135/2008, August 10, 2008*

**On 5 August, an innocent Jumma villager was subjected to inhuman torture in the village of Down under Belaichari Upazila in Rangamati district.**

The army personnel tortured Tukkyia Tongchongya s/o Heng Chandra Tongchongya on the charge of providing support to the members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).

His right leg has been fractured as a result of the beating. The army personnel led by Captain Tanvir, commander of Meranghcara army camp, also searched his house.

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## **Two UPDF members, one villager arrested in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 136/2008, August 12, 2008*

**Two members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) and an innocent villager had been arrested in Belaichari under Rangamati district yesterday.**

A group of army personnel led by Major Fakruddin of Digholchari zone made the arrest around 4 pm while the UPDF members were on their way to the village of Down Nuopara to interview Ms Shanti Devi Chakma, 40, who was reportedly raped on 4 August by some army soldiers.

The arrested UPDF members are Tarun Kumar Tonchongya, 28, s/o Phuleshwar Tonchongya of village Moghachari Moanpara under Moidong Union in Jurachari Upazila and Nagor Chakma alias Kammuo, 22, s/o Ajit Kumar Chakma of village West Dewan Para under Sabekyong Union in Naniachar Upazila.

They were arrested from a shop at Amtola in Belaichari Sadar.

Later, the soldiers also arrested a villager named Sukh Moni Chakma (19) s/o Tarani Chakma from Rajdhan Chara village under Belaichari Sadar Union.

At 9 pm the arrested Jummas were handed over to Belaichari police station and a case (No. 1, 11 August 2008) was filed against them under section 19A of the Arms Act.

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## **UP member arrested in Barkal**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 137/2008, August 13, 2008*

**The Bangladesh border security force, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), personnel on 9 August arrested Laltu Lal Chakma, 45, s/o late Suresh Moni Chakma of Aimachara from Barkal bazaar. He is an incumbent member of Aimachara Union.**

The BDR arrested him at around 2pm without any warrant, handed him over to the police and falsely implicated him in previously filed cases.

He has been sent to Rangamati jail.

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## **Settlers attack Jumma village in Sajek after CHT Commission's visit**

**Hot on the heels of the CHT Commission's visit to the area, the illegal settlers backed by a strong contingent of army personnel carried out an attack on the village of Gangaram Mukh in Sajek under Rangamati district on 9 August.**

There are serious allegations that army and settlers have been resorting to vengeful actions against those Jummas who gave interview to the delegation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission who visited the three districts of Khagrachari, Rangamati and Bandarban from 7 - 10 August. The Commission visited Sajek on 8 August.

Speaking to the chtnews.com yesterday in South Khabangpujya, Mukul Kumar Chakma s/o late Sukesh Shobhan Chakma of village Gangaram Mukh in Sajek alleged that on the night of 9 August a group of Bengali settlers backed by a group of army personnel from Baghaihat zone attacked their village and ransacked his house for giving an interview to the CHT Commission the day before.

Narrating the incident he said "Since the evening of 9 August Bengali people had been whispering among themselves (planning an attack). At 10 pm they started shouting in a chorus. Then at 11 pm we heard them calling out to each other. A few moments later I saw them coming across to our house with their torches on. I woke my wife Arati Chakma up from bed. My daughter woke up herself. I told them to take some necessary things. Thereafter, I tried to wake my son Kuchi Chakma (13). He was reluctant to get up, but I kicked him out of the bed. As we were putting our belongings in bags, the settlers gave a big shout and attacked our house. We jumped into the Kachalong River in fear and hid ourselves in the nearby jungle. From there we could hear the settlers telling (to the army personnel) 'Sir, there is none in the house'. We also heard them breaking our belongings in the house. Our family was not alone. There were about 200/250 people of the village who fled their homes. We all stayed the whole night in the jungle without a wink of sleep. The settlers kept shouting the whole night."

A farmer and a pastor, Mr. Chakma said they came back home the next morning after the settlers had gone. He continued: "The settlers ransacked the house of Buddho Dhan and the shop of Tungkala Chakma. They also ransacked the house of Hridoy Ranjan (65) and took him away. Later we came to know that he was beaten seriously. As a result he sustained injury in his head and in his right thigh, and his left arm paralysed. During the attack settlers caught some Jumma villagers who were not able to run away. After returning to the village, we came to know that the army also took part in the ransacking of our houses. They particularly searched for Pramika Chakma (a teacher of UNICEF-run Para Kendra or village centre) and asked the villagers 'Where is Pramika?' They were looking for her because she had given an interview to the CHT Commission."

He said the villagers had collected Taka 400 and given it to him to come to Khagrachari to report the incident to the CHT Commission. "I came to Dighinala on foot, traversing jungle paths. That took me 6 hours from 10 am to 4 pm. From Dighinala I phoned Ms

Sarah Hossain and told her what happened after the CHT Commission had left. She advised me to contact two Jumma Advocates -- Gayana Chakma and Ashutosh Chakma. I contacted them accordingly and came to Khagrachari."

Mr. Chakma said he went back to the village on 12 August. "I went up to Jora Bridge by bus and then walked home. It took me 4 hours. When I reached home, I came to know that the CO of Baghaihat zone was searching for me. I spent the night in fear, and after dawn I lost no time to come back to Khagrachari."

He went on to say: "Now I am on the run. I never spent a single night out. If I have to keep on like this, I will join the party (UPDF). I will work for the people and for my land. (Ikko mui dhei dhei aagong. Mui kanadin ghara barey reit nah kadang. Idikkenguri thei paley mui Partyit sumim. Desh jdattei kam gurim.)"

He said his family was running out of food. So were the other villagers. One kind-hearted person distributed 2 bags of rice to each of the affected families. "We got 8kgs. I grew one thousand orange saplings, but I could not sell them due to the tense situation." he lamented.

Mr. Chakma said when the CHT Commission visited their village on 8 August the villagers gave it a warm reception. "We showed them the affected areas and five of us agreed to give interviews."

The others who gave interview to the Commission included 1. Ms Pramita Chakma, 26, teacher of Unicef Para Kendra (Unicef-run village centre), 2. wife of Shuddhodhan Chakma, 3. Jiban Shanti Chakma of village Simana Para and 4. wife of Bilash Karbari or Gadabi's mother.

Of them, Shuddhodhan's wife (he could not remember her name) was beaten by the CO of Baghaihat zone, and as a result her right hand got fractured. Others have gone into hiding, fearing arrest and harassment, he said.

### **Bandarban**

Choton Kanti Tonchongya from Bandarban said he had to go into hiding after his meeting with the CHT Commission on 10 August. "The army is searching for me" he told the chtnews.com. "An army officer asked Jolmoni Tonchongya about me and my whereabouts."

He said the day before the CHT Commission's visit to Bandarban, some people under the banner of Sacheton Chattra Samaj (Conscious Students Community) put up posters at different places in the town. The posters were about land grabbing and human rights violations in the CHT. "But the army blames me and UPDF for this. The Purbokone (a daily published form Chittagong) ran a lengthy news article about it on 13 August." he said.

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## **Photographs of Mukul Bikash Chakma**

**(Referred to in news No. 138 entitled "Settlers attack Jumma village in Sajek after CHT Commission's visit")**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 139/2008, August 14, 2008*

**Please find attached photographs of Mukul Bikash Chakma of Gangaram Mukh, Sajek, whose house came under settler attack on the night of 9 August 2008, hot on the heels of the CHT Commission's visit to the area.**

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## **Continued tension in Sajek: One Jumma murdered**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 140/2008, August 20, 2008*

**The illegal settlers last night kidnapped and murdered a Jumma villager in Sajek under Rangamati district. The incident comes barely nine days after a settler attack on the village of Gangaram Mukh in the area.**

Sources from Khagrachari said a group of about 35 illegal settlers backed by army personnel from Baghaihat zone raided the house Jadu Moni Chakma, 55, in the village of Retkaba Doar at about 9:30 p.m. and forced him out at dagger's point.

Three of the settlers, with their faces under cover, entered the house while the others remained outside. At some distance, there were a few dozen army personnel providing protection to them.

Jadu Moni Chakma's wife was hurt when the settlers hit her with a sharp knife.

His dead body was recovered in the morning today from a place barely 40 - 45 yards from ECB army camp at Gangaram Doar. The army immediately seized the dead body and sent it to Khagrachari hospital.

Our correspondent from Khagrachari said the army personnel had cordoned off the hospital, and no Jumma had been allowed to enter it.

HWF leader Rina Dewan said "we went to see the dead body, but the army refused to allow us in."

General Secretary of the Democratic Youth Forum, Mithun Chakma, who contacted some of the villagers in Sajek after the incident, quoted eyewitnesses as saying that there were cut marks all over the body of the victim.

According to him some of the attackers have been identified as Mohammad Ali, 28, s/o Nachor Ali; Dulal, 24, s/o Noor Alam; Nurul Alam, 24, s/o Jolpu Mian and husband of Mohammad Ali's sister.

Quoting the villagers, the DYF leader further said a few days ago, these settlers had built houses on the land of Jadu Moni Chakma, but the Jummas had dismantled them.

The Hill Students Council, Hill Women's Federation and Democratic Youth Forum are scheduled to hold a protest rally on Dhaka University campus tomorrow.

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## **UPDF member arrested by RAB in Chittagong**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 141/2008, August 22, 2008*

**A member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) has been arrested from New Mooring area under Bandar Police Station in Chittagong.**

The members of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) arrested Sujon Chakma (25) s/o Satyobir Chakma of village Kattoli in Longudu Upazilla of Rangamati district from his brother Meroon Chakma's house at New Mooring last night.

Speaking to the chtnews.com, Mr. Meroon Chakma, who works at Suntex Garments at CEPZ, said "the RAB men came at around 11 at night. At first, three people -- one of them wearing a Burka (Muslim women's veil) -- came to our house."

"The one wearing Burka stayed at the door outside while the others entered the house", he continued. "They asked how many of us live in the house and wanted to know our names. When all of us finished telling our names they went out to the Burka-clad person and then came back a few minutes later, after consulting with that guy"

"They made us to tell our names again, and when we did, they asked my brother Sujon to go with them." he said and added, "at this stage we asked who they were, and they showed their identities."

He suspects the man wearing the veil to be a member of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu faction). He is trying to contact the RAB - 7 headquarters at Patenga.

Sujon Chakma, a member of the UPDF, came to Chittagong to see his brother a few days ago.

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## **PCP-DYF and HWF observe 5th anniversary of Mahalchari Mayhem**

[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com)

News No. 142/2008, August 27, 2008

### **The Hill Student's Council, Hill Women's Federation and Democratic Youth Forum observed Mahalchari Mayhem Day yesterday in Khagrachari.**

In a commemoration meeting held at Swanirbhor, the speakers said the policy of ethnic cleansing that resulted in numerous attacks on innocent Jumma people including the Mahalchari Mayhem is being pursued vigorously by the present interim caretaker government. They urged the government not to follow in the footsteps of its predecessor partisan governments.

Presided over by Ani Bikash Chakma, president of PCP Khagrachari District unit, the meeting was also addressed by Arpan Chakma, GS of PCP Khagrachari unit, Remin Chakma, a DYF member, Konika Dewan, organising secretary of the HWF central committee and Rina Dewan, president of HWF Khagrachari District unit.

They criticized the government for the failure to form a judicial committee to investigate the incident and for its attempt at cover-up.

At least 350 Jumma houses were burnt to ashes, two persons including an 8-month old baby killed and 10 Jumma women raped during the Mahalchari Mayhem perpetrated jointly by illegal settlers and the Bangladesh Army on 26 August 2003. Over 1,300 people in 10 villages were affected in the gruesome attack.

The incident provoked national and international condemnation, but the government of the day failed to punish those responsible for the attack.

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### **UP member arrested in Naniachar**

[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com)

News No. 143/2008, August 27, 2008

### **An elected member of Naniachar Union Parishad has been arrested from Naniachar bazaar in Rangamati district.**

The army personnel from Naniachari zone arrested Sentru Chakma, 35, (s/o late Bipin Bihari Chakma), an incumbent member of Naniachar Union Parishad, at around 1p.m. today.

He is from Padachari village under Naniachar Upazila. The army handed him over to the police. Sources from Rangamati said he has been implicated in a previously filed murder case, although his name was not included when the case was originally filed.

Mr. Chakma is an ardent supporter of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), and his elder brother, Mr. Bipulask Chakma -- who is now in jail -- is a member of the UPDF.

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## **Two UP members arrested in Naniachar**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 144/2008, August 27, 2008*

**Two elected members of Naniachar Union Parishad, including a female member, have been arrested from Naniachar bazaar in Rangamati district.**

Mr. Sentru Chakma 35, (s/o late Bipin Bihari Chakma) and Ms Nirmala Dewan alias Niru (w/o Mongol Joti Chakma) were arrested by army at around 1p.m. today while they were returning from the office of the TNO after attending a meeting on law and order. Both of them are incumbent members of Naniachar Union Parishad.

Mr. Sentru Chakma (mentioned in News No. 143) is from Padachari village and Ms Niru from Hullyangpara village under Naniachar Upazila. The army handed them over to the police. Sources from Rangamati said Mr. Sentru Chakma has been implicated in a previously filed murder case, although his name was not included when the case was originally filed. It is not known what charges have been brought against Ms Niru.

Both of them are staunch supporter of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), and Mr. Sentru Chakma's elder brother, Mr. Bipulask Chakma -- who is now in jail -- is a member of the UPDF.

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## **Sajek victims demand withdrawal of settlers**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 145/2008, August 29, 2008*

**Sajek victims at a press conference yesterday at Reporters Unity, Dhaka, called upon the interim caretaker government to withdraw the settlers from Sajek, stop land grabbing and punish the murderers of Ladu Moni Chakma.**

Organised in cooperation with the Democratic Youth Forum, Hill Women's Federation and Hill Student's Council, the press conference was attended by four victims of the latest settler attacks in Sajek -- Mukul Bikash Chakma, Hridoy Ranjan Chakma, Tara Kinkor Chakma and Minti Chakma alias Chikonpudi, wife of Ladu Moni Chakma.

In a written statement read out by Mukul Bikash Chakma, the victims narrated the incidents that took place since the 20 April settler attack in the area.



They said immediately after the visit of the members of the CHT Commission to Sajek, the settlers began threatening the Jummas for speaking to the Commission, and 9 August they attacked four Jumma houses in Gangaramdoar, leaving Hridoy Ranjan Chakma seriously wounded. The settlers also ransacked and looted the houses and tore books on Jesus Christ to pieces.

Hridoy Ranjan Chakma said "It was half past eleven in the night. ... The settlers were advancing near our house while shouting. I woke up from bed. I heard the settlers saying 'there is a house over here'. As soon as I opened the door, they began beating me, without asking me anything. They hit me on the back, legs and hands with sticks. At one stage they hit me in the head, and I fell on the ground unconscious."

"A little later when I regained my senses, I found a member of the Ansar (paramilitary force) taking me near the road, holding my hand. He took me beside an army vehicle. An army Subedar (Warrant Officer) named Rabiul was there. From there, they led me to the CO. I said to the CO: 'Sir, why did the settlers beat me? What wrong have I done? As you have seen, I always take part in your meetings. But why this happened to me?' After hearing this, the CO, Sajid Imtiaz said, 'tuth beta' (you wretch!)" He continued. "I was still soaked in blood. The Bengalis were roaming near the army personnel. They were armed with "*dao*", axes, long knives, "dhama" etc. They were 20 - 25 in number. Those who beat me were also roaming around."

All the victims were unanimous in their accusation that the attack was carried out because "we spoke to the CHT Commission".

Narrating the 19 August attack in which Ladu Moni Chakma was chopped to death, his wife Ms Minti Chakma of Retkaba village said, "On the day of incident, that is on 19 August, at around 10 in the night, we woke up by the shouts 'open the door, open the door' and the knocks at the door". Without us realizing what was going on, three Bengali people broke into the house. They asked us to cover our eyes, and cut the mosquito nets hung over the beds. They threw our clothes at us so that we could blindfold us with them. They told us to blindfold us ourselves. My sons tried to get up from bed, but they were kicked.

"At this time, they began to take my husband out. My eyes were covered with folds. My husband tried to resist. They also tried to take my daughter, Minu, out, but I vigorously resisted and they hit me in my forehead with a knife. When they were entering the house I saw knives in their hands and recognised Ali."

She said after the Bengalis took her husband out, she and her children fled away through the backdoor of the house, and took shelter in the house of Joy Mongol Bap. "I was coming back the next morning when I found the mutilated body of Ladu Moni Chakma on the west side of Baghaihat road." she said.

She said she filed a case with the Baghaichari police station and heard that three of the culprits were arrested.

She said on the night the incident took place there was no army vehicle patrolling the road, which was unlike other nights.

Ms Minti Chakma said their house was also burnt down during the 20 April deadly attack, but they had built it within one week of the attack.

The victims said that the settlers felt encouraged to launch further attacks because no legal actions had been taken against those responsible for the 20 April attack. They said "Immediately after the 20 April attack, the settlers embarked on the grabbing of the Jumma people's lands with new vigor. They built about 50 - 60 new huts on our lands in the villages of Simanachara, Retkaba and Gangaram. Military personnel from Baghahat zone directly assisted the settlers. In Gangaramdoar, the settlers built a row of small huts after destroying a cottage built for the Buddhist monks. 10 - 15 settler families have now settled there. An army sentry post has been erected there to provide security to the settlers"

The victims further said "we want to live in peace as citizens of the country with our lands and property. In the past there was no conflict with the Bengalis over land or any other issue. The problem started when Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Imtiaz, commander of Baghahat zone, brought in settlers from different areas and took initiative to settle them on our lands."

"There will be no peace until the settlers are taken back from Baghahat" they said.

They also placed a five-point demand to the government. These include 1. withdrawal of the settlers from Baghahat; 2. putting an end to forcible land grabbing and stoppage of rehabilitation of the settlers; 3. providing Taka 300,000 as compensation to each of the victim families of the 20 April attack; providing compensation to the affected families of 9 and 19 August attacks; punishment to Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Imtiaz and businessman Golam Mawla for the 20 April attack; 4. exemplary punishment to the murderers of Ladu Moni Chakma and arrest and trial of their abettors; adequate compensation to the family of Ladu Moni Chakma; and 5. providing security to the life and property of the Jumma people and putting an end to the army incitement to the settlers against the Jumma people.

The press conference was also attended, among others, by Super Joti Chakma, organising secretary of the Democratic Youth Forum; Ricoh Chakma, president of the Hill Student's Council, Thuikyoching Marma, Office Secretary of the PCP; Sonali Chakma, president of Hill Women's Federation and Nepali Chakma, a member of the HWF.

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## **Army arrests ex-PCP member in Manikchari**

[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com)

News No. 146/2008, September 10, 2008

**One ex-member of the Hill Students Council, better known by its Bengali acronym PCP, and another villager have been arrested in Manikchari under Khagrachari district.**

Sources said a group of army personnel from Batnatoli camp raided the house of Apru Marma, 26, ex-president of PCP Manikchari unit, in the village of Batnatoli at midnight last night and took him to the camp.

The soldiers also raided two houses in Toblapara village and arrested Joy Singh Marma, 24. He was taken to the camp along with Apru Marma.

The army personnel then searched for Memong Marma in his house and molested his wife Ms Arema Marma, 30, after failing to find him there.

Both Apru Marma and Joy Singh Marma were severely tortured in the camp. However, Joy Singh Marma was released in the morning.

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## **Army raids UPDF office, supporter's house in Naniachar**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 147/2008, September 12, 2008*

**In a predawn raid today, army personnel searched the office of the United Peoples Democratic Front at T&T area and the house of one of its supporters in Noadam under Naniachar Upazila (sub-district) of Rangamati district.**

Sources in UPDF said the armed soldiers from Naniachari zone under Rangamati district encircled the office at night and broke into it at dawn. They turned the rooms upside down but found nothing incriminating.

The office, which is just a few hundred yards away from the army zone headquarters, had remained locked ever since a state of emergency was proclaimed in the country on 11 January last year.

In another raid, the soldiers searched the house of Bharallya Chakma, 48, in the village of Noadam, about 1 kilometer east of the zone headquarters.

The army men looked for him but he was able to run away and avoid arrest. Mr. Chakma is a staunch supporter of the UPDF.

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## **Villager tortured in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 148/2008, September 14, 2008*

**One Jumma villager in Belaichari of Rangamati district has been seriously wounded after army personnel tortured him. (Victim's photograph attached)**

A belated report reaching from the area said on 4 August, Monday, at around 8 am a group of about 30 - 40 army soldiers led by captain Tanvir (8th Bengal), commander of Dhupchari camp, went to the house of Tonnyapu Tonchongya, 40, (s/o Kangchandra Tonchongya and mother's name Phulmoti Tonchongya) in Downpara.

Captain Tanvir demanded of him to give them a few chickens. When Mr. Tonchongya refused, the soldiers took him to Downpara Government Primary School premises, blind folded him and beat him up severely, resulting in the fracture of his right leg.

Thereafter, Tanvir forced the local village chief, Anil Chandra Tonchongya and Doctor Priya Dorshi to sign a statement stating that Mr. Tonnyapu Tonchongya got his leg fractured while running away.

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**Two Karbaris arrested in Ramgarh**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 149/2008, September 18, 2008*

**Two Karbaris or village chiefs have been arrested in Ramgarh under Khagrachari district, sources said.**

They have been identified as Kri Aung Marma (45) and Pajei Marma (45), chiefs of Kalapani and Tabalapara villages respectively.

They were arrested today at around 4:30 pm by army personnel from Batnatoli camp from the shop of Mong Kyo Marma at Kalapani.

No further details are available.

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**PCP marks National Education Day**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 150/2008, September 19, 2008*

**The Hill Student's Council, better known by its Bengali acronym PCP, marked National Education Day on 17 September, calling upon the government to introduce ethnic people's languages in primary education system in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.**

To observe the Day, the PCP, a front organisation of the United Peoples Democratic Front, took out a procession and held a rally on Dhaka University campus.

The procession started at 11:30 am and paraded the arts faculty on the campus before holding the rally.

Held in front of the Aparajeyo Bangla sculpture and presided over by the PCP president Ricoh Chakma, the rally was addressed among others by Kyolaching Marma, central organising secretary of the PCP, Ms Kanica Dewan, organising secretary of the HWF, Samiul Alam Richi, president of Bangladesh Chattra Federation and Nurur Islam Shiplu, president of Biplobi Chattra Jubo Andolon.

The speakers were introduced by Aungyo Marma, General Secretary of the PCP.

The PCP president Ricoh Chakma in his speech said the successive governments of the country have not only neglected the cultures and languages of the ethnic Jumma people in the CHT, but also took measures to destroy them.

He said it is the responsibility of any democratic government to protect and promote the cultures and languages of the ethnic minorities, but unfortunately except Bangla no other languages have been recognized in the constitution of Bangladesh.

He called upon the government to accept his organisation's five-point demand relating to education and introduce primary education in ethnic people's languages in the CHT.

Ms Kanica Chakma urged all concerned including the government to stop airing on the TV and radio statements and remarks that show disrespect to the ethnic nationalities.

Kyolaching Marma said although Bangladesh is a multi-national, multi-cultural and multi-lingual country, the ethnic nationalities are not recognized in the constitution of Bangladesh. "Our languages are on the verge of extinction. Yet, the government has done nothing to protect them." He also made a fervent plea to the government, print and electronic media to refrain from referring to the Jumma people as "Upajati" or tribe. He said such a reference is the most offensive to the ear of the Jumma people.

Nurur Islam Shiplu said the ruling classes of Bangladesh are ultra nationalist, and they are out to impose their own hegemonic policies upon other ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities of the country. He said there can be no national, linguistic and gender equality unless a progressive and revolutionary government is installed.

Samiul Alam Richi said side by side with the Bengali people, other ethnic peoples and nationalities also fought in the war of independence, but the ruling classes which usurped state power after independence refused to give recognition to their existence and tried to impose Bengali identity on them. "As a result, the Jumma people in the CHT had to take up arms and wage a guerrilla war to defend their rights." he said.

He said the CHT is far from peaceful and "the people are still being subjected to repression."

He supported the five-point demand of the PCP and urged the government to concede to these most fundamental demands.

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## **Harsh conditions for CHT students to sit for MBBS admission tests, reports New Age**

[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com)

News No. 151/2008, September 26, 2008

*"The government has apparently made life difficult for a number of students from the Chittagong Hill Tracts who are aspiring to study MBBS as it has imposed a number of 'unrealistic' conditions which they will have to fulfill to prove their indigenous identity to avail themselves of the 'tribal' quota." said the English daily The New Age in a news article today. The full report follows.*

### **Harsh conditions for CHT students to sit for MBBS admission tests**

**Staff Correspondent**

The government has apparently made life difficult for a number of students from the Chittagong Hill Tracts who are aspiring to study MBBS as it has imposed a number of 'unrealistic' conditions which they will have to fulfill to prove their indigenous identity to avail themselves of the 'tribal' quota.

The students, who have passed the Higher Secondary Certificate examination and wish to sit for admission to medical courses, alleged that the conditions, including a certificate from the secretary to the CHT affairs ministry, which the health ministry imposed last year in spite of the CHT affairs ministry's objection, appear to be repressive.

'We need to invest a lot of time to manage a certificate from the secretary to the CHT ministry. It appears repressive to the students since they have to spend so much time and energy fulfilling those conditions when they are supposed to prepare for the exams,' said Jyoti Jiban Chakma from Khagrachhari, who wants to be admitted to a medical college.

The government has already floated newspaper advertisements seeking applications from suitable candidates for the MBBS course in 14 public medical colleges for the 2008-09 academic session from September 28. The last date for filing applications is October 14 while the admission tests will be held on October 24, 2008.

As per the advertisement, the candidates from the three hill districts — Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban — must submit certificates signed by the particular circle chiefs and the deputy commissioners along with academic certificates.

The students said they need a lot of time to get certificates from the circle chiefs and the deputy commissioners as they need to submit clearance certificates from the headmen or

chairmen of union parishads or municipalities. Police verification is also needed to obtain a certificate from the deputy commissioner.

The condition of acquiring a certificate from the secretary to the ministry appears repressive as most of the students have no access to the ministry, and obtaining such a certificate is time-consuming, said the students from the hills.

The students belonging to the ethnic minority communities, in a memorandum, urged the chief adviser to make the medical admission process hassle-free.

<http://www.newagebd.com/2008/sep/26/met.html>

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## **One Jumma youth tortured in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 152/2008, September 28, 2008*

**On 23 September, a Jumma youth was arrested and subjected to inhuman torture during an army raid on the village of Down Nuopara in Belaichari, Rangamati district.**

Reports said a group of army personnel led by Captain Tanvir of Merangchari camp conducted the raid at around noon on that day. The soldiers picked Hiro Chakma alias Ranjan (20) s/o Lakshmi Chakma up from their home, beat him up and then took him to the camp.

He was released the next day, on 24 September and went into hiding for fear of further harassment.

Our correspondent quoted his mother Shanti Devi Chakma, who herself was raped by army personnel last month, as saying that Hiro Chakma was taken to Dhupchari army camp and was subjected to inhuman physical torture.

"The army asked him about whereabouts of the UPDF members. He said he did not know except that the UPDF members come to our village once a week. After that, the army put a home-made gun into his hands and said 'will you help us arrest UPDF men, or you want us to send you to the Thana' (police station)? Hiro got scared, and agreed to help them arrest the UPDF members in the area. It is after this commitment that the army set him free." Shanti Devi Chakma was quoted as saying.

She said Hiro was so frightened that he would not stay in the village, and went into hiding, fearing further arrest. "He knows he will not be able to provide any information leading to the arrest of the UPDF men, and such a failure will certainly lead to his further arrest." she commented, adding "his father also got frightened and accompanied him."

Tanvir has earned notoriety for torturing innocent people after stripping them naked. In the last few months, he has made a number of raids into the village of Down Nuopara and other areas under Sakrachari Mouza No. 120 and tortured many innocent villagers.

On 4 August, Hiro Chakma's mother Shanti Devi Chakma (40) was gang-raped by a group of army soldiers during one such raid on the village. The same Captain Tanvir led the raid.

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## **Rats ate up Jum harvest in Bandarban**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 153/2008, September 30, 2008*

**Countless hordes of rats have eaten up the Jum harvest of the indigenous Jumma people in Ruma, Thanchi and Roangchari Upazila of Bandarban district, says a news report published on Tuesday in the daily Suprabhat Bangladesh, a Bengali daily published from Chittagong.**

The report has warned of an acute crisis of food in these areas. It said "this correspondent visited some of the indigenous villages in Ruma and witnessed the distressing picture of the Jum cultivators." Besides rat invasion, the wild bores were also responsible for the destruction of their Jum fields, it added.

Citing indigenous Jum cultivators in Ruma Upazila, the report said the assaults of the rats had increased after the last year's bamboo flowering in their area. "The indigenous Jumias (Jum cultivators) said one year's bamboo flowering leads to the massive growth of rat population for the next three years. After eating up the bamboo flowers, the rats carry out raids into the Jum fields and eat away the produces such as paddy, maize, potatoes and bananas."

Sadeq Hossain Chowdhury, the writer of the report, said the deluge of rats rendered the Jum cultivators of Ruma Sadar, Remakri-Prangsha, Paindu and Galengya Unions almost destitute. "Many had borrowed money at a higher rate of interest in the hope that they would be able to pay it back after Jum harvest. The local public representatives have expressed concern about their future." he said.

Quoting Jingsawm Lian Bawm, chairman of Remakri-Prangsha Union, he said "like in the preceding year, this year has also seen a rat invasion in his area. Added to this is the assault of wild bores in the Jum fields. Over three hundred Jumia families in his Union will face severe food crisis."

According to his report, some of the affected villages are Floppy Para, Chakkyong Para, Thindolthey Para, Kaleha Para, Thanarang Para, Nishi Para, Jonarang Para, Hlaching Para in Remakri-Prangsha Union; Namdui Para, Paleng Para, Paroi Para, Monguha Para, Aunglai Para, Laipung Headman Para, Tongreng Pra in Gelengya Union; Moyur Para,



Bot-toli Para, Rumachar Para, Samakhal Para, Naitong Para, Arjun Para, Manglengraw Para, Thandajhiri Para, Kaudong Para, Bogamukh Para, Moyu Para in Ruma Sadar Union; and Sanakraw Para, Charagraw Para, Poli Prangsha Para and Kyathai Para in Paindu Union.

Citing Chingsanu Marma, Member of Ward No. 9 of Paindu Union, the report said "as a result of a rat invasion Jum harvests including ripen paddy and maize have been destroyed in a number of indigenous villages under his Union."

"The Karbari (village chief) of Pantol Para, Mr. Kolamaung, expressed concern that after one or two months many Jumia families will have to starve." the report added.

Quoting Kyoching Aung, the Karbari of Moyur Pra in Ruama Sadar and Kyoching Pru Marma, the Karbari of Rumachar Para, the report further said: "rats and wild bores made their assaults at the time of harvest and destroyed the Jum produce including ripen paddy and maize. The little they could save is barely enough for two-three months' consumption."

To be able to cultivate their Jums, many indigenous people borrowed money at a higher rate of interest from government as well as non-government organisations, the report said quoting local newsman Nurul Islam. "Deeply concerned about repayment of the loans, many of them have given in to frustration."

The report cited Ulhaching Marma, chairman of Ruma Sadar Union, and said: "As a result of a rat and wild bore invasion, many thousand families have lost their Jum harvest."

Mr. Marma expressed concern that the victim families are at a high risk of facing severe food crisis, the report said.

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## **Army removes Buddha statues from Bhujulichuk meditation centre**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 154/2008, October 02, 2008*

**Army personnel have removed the statues of the Lord Buddha form the Bhujulichuk meditation centre, situated on a remote hilltop in Lakshmichari under Khagrachari district, sources from Lakshmichari said.**

A member of Lakshmichari Union Parishad told chtnews.com on condition of anonymity that on 23 September a group of 20 - 22 Bangladesh Army soldiers led by Captain Islam, commander of Shuknachari Indra Singh Karbari Para camp, went to the meditation centre at Bhujulichuk hill. They took two villagers -- Sunil Chakma and Bhejallya Chakma of Shuknachari village -- along with them.

"The soldiers passed the night there, and came back the next morning, taking four statues of the Lord Buddha with them." the UP member said and added that they did not know where the statues had been kept.

He further said the army men at first asked Sunil and Bhejallya to carry the statues, but they refused saying they could not touch them (Buddha statues) without the permission of the Buddhist monks.

No Buddhist monks or novices were present when Buddha statues were being stolen.

Until 31 December 2007, when a group of army personnel from the same camp destroyed the Bhujulichuk Meditation centre for the third time, two fully ordained monks and a novice used to live there. (*See Hill Watch Human Rights Forum report No. 3 titled "Army ransacks Buddhist temple in Lakshmichari"*) However, because of persistent harassment and pressure from the army they eventually had to leave the place, leaving the Buddha statues behind for the nearby villagers to take care of.

During another attack on 21 December last year, Captain Shohel declared: "we will not tolerate any 'Buddha house' here; we will build 'Allah's house'."

Ms Rina, an activist of the Hill Watch Human Rights Forum, told chtnews.com that they had verified the allegation and found it to be true. She said religious persecution and other forms of human rights abuses in the Chittagong Hill Tracts had increased dramatically since the state of emergency was imposed in the country.

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## **Rally marking Children's Week in Khagrachari**

[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com)

*News No. 155/2008, October 05, 2008*

**Huang Boi-o-ba, a community library organisation, organised various activities including a rally to mark the National Children's Week today.**

Led by Huang Boi-o-ba president Ms Daisy Chakma and General Secretary Jemin Chakma, the rally took off at 10 am from Swanirbhor bazaar and went up to Chengi Square. Around 100 children took part in the rally, carrying a banner and placards.

The rally was soon followed by a cultural function, which was held at Perachara UP Auditorium. The children sang songs and recited poems and rhymes.

A discussion is scheduled to be held in the afternoon. Ex-teacher and educationist Ananta Bihari Khisha, retired professor Modhu Mongol Chakma and ex-principal of Khagrachari Government College, Bodhisatwa Chakma will attend as the special guests.

As part of the programme to mark the Children's Week, the Huang Boi-o-ba earlier organised a Book Show from 29 September to 5 October. On 4 October, it also organised a painting competition for the children.

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## **So-called Sama Adhikar leader arrested**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 156/2008, October 05, 2008*

**A leader of the so-called Sama Adhikar Andolan, a platform of a section of the Bengali settlers, has been arrested for setting fire to the newly built settler houses in Char Mile area under Baghaichari Upazila in Rangamati district.**

One source said the houses were set on fire in the small hours yesterday, 4 October. About 15 houses were burnt to ashes. The motive of the culprits was to fan communal tension by putting the blame on the Jumma people and create a pretext to launch an attack on their villages a la 20 April Sajek attack.

But in the morning it became clear to all who actually set the fire, and Selim Uddin Bahari, president of Baghatichari Unit of the Sama Adhikar Andolan, was immediately arrested.

His arrest led to a brief fight between a section of the settlers and the BDR and police personnel, and a number of BDR and police personnel were reportedly injured when the settlers pelted brickbats at them.

Police arrested another four settlers from the scene, sources further said. The arrested were sent to the Baghaichari police station.

Selim Uddin Bahari was one of the masterminds behind the 20 April deadly settler attack in Sajek in which 77 Jumma houses were burnt down. The Jummas are still reeling from the said attack.

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## **UPDF demands release of Ranglai Murung**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 157/2008, October 15, 2008*

**United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) and its front organisations in a letter addressed to the Chief Adviser on 13 October expressed concern about the deteriorating health condition of Ranglai Murung and demanded his immediate release.**

Mr. Ranglai Murung, headman of Reingkhong Mouza and chairman of Sualok Union in Bandarban district, was arrested by joint forces of army and police personnel on 23 February last year from his Ujanipara residence. He was charged with possessing illegal arms and was sentenced to 17 years in jail by a speedy trial tribunal.

The letter was signed by UPDF's central committee member Sachib Chakma, Hill Women's Federation president Sonali Chakma, Democratic Youth Forum's publication secretary Alakesh Chakma and Hill Students Council president Ricoh Chakma.

They said "We are deeply concerned about the deteriorating health condition of Mr. Ranglai Murung, a member of Murung nationality in Bandarban district of Chittagong Hill Tracts, who is now being detained in Chittagong jail."

Terming the failure of the authorities concerned to provide Mr. Murung better treatment as discriminatory, they said "so far the government has arranged better treatment for many prisoners being detained on corruption charges. Not only that, it has released many of them on parole so that they can receive medical treatment abroad. However, it is regrettable that in the case of Mr. Ranglai Murung, the government has completely failed to make such an arrangement as per advice of his attending doctors."

About his trial, the leaders said it has never been "fair and impartial" and added that there had been allegations that the army intimidated the witnesses so as to influence the proceeding of the trial.

"We think the arrest and trial of Ranglai Murung is politically motivated. Since long before his arrest, he had been campaigning for the protection of the rights his Murung nationality, and he was particularly vocal against military attempts to grab their traditional and community-owned lands in Bandarban." the letter further said.

The leaders also demanded that the false charges brought against him be withdrawn, an impartial inquiry be ordered to probe physical torture that he was meted out immediately after arrest and those responsible be brought to justice.

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## **UPDF urges government to reinstate Buddha statues in Bhujulichuk**

[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com)

*News No. 158/2008, October 17, 2008*

**THE United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) has urged the government to reinstate the Buddha statues removed from Bhujulichuk Buddhist meditation centre in Lakshmichari of Khagrachari district.**

In a letter addressed to the Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachari district on 7 October, UPDF's District Organiser Apu Chakma wrote: "On 23 September 2008, a group of 20 -

22 army personnel led by Captain Islam, commander of Shuknachari Indra Singh Para camp, went to Bhujulichuk Meditation Centre situated on the hill top of Bhujulichuk, stayed there overnight and then took away four Buddha statues from the said meditation centre the next day."

The letter also narrated the previous army assaults on the meditation centre and harassment of the Buddhist monks there.

Terming Bangladesh as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural country, UPDF leader Mr. Apu Chakma said "each and every government (of Bangladesh) has spoken of the rights of the citizens to practice their own religion, and the constitution of the country also guarantees this right. But yet, it is beyond our comprehension as to why and under which authority of law a few army personnel continue to attack religious institutions and encroach upon the religious rights of the citizens."

The letter said repeated attacks on religious institutions like Bhujulichuk Meditation Centre and harassment of the meditating monks has caused resentment among the Buddhist community in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

"We think you should play more energetic role to make sure that each and every religious community in your district are able to practice its own religion without any hindrance" the letter told the DC.

It also urged the Deputy Commissioner to investigate the military interventions in Bhujulichuk Meditation Centre and take measures to ensure congenial atmosphere for practicing meditation there, to punish those responsible for the attacks on BMC and to stop religious persecution in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

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## **Army 2-IC accused of ordering settlers to grab Jumma's land**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 159/2008, October 17, 2008*

**Villagers of Gangaram Doar in Sajek alleged that the second-in-command of Baghaihat army zone has ordered the illegal settlers to grab 10 acres of land belonging to four Jummas.**

Speaking to the chtnews.com Mr Hridoy Ranjan Chakma said on 14 October, the 2-IC went to Gongaram Doar village and announced that 40 settler families would be settled there.

"Turning to the Bengali settlers who accompanied him, the army commander said 'from now on you will live here", Mr Chakma alleged.

"Of the 10 acres, 2 acres belong to me, 1 acre to Ms Arati Chakma, 2 acres to Lalu Chakma and one and a half acres to Buddha Dhan Chakma." he further said. "The rest belong to other Jumma villagers."

Hridoy Ranjan Chakma came to Khagrachari town on 15 October to seek advice from the UPDF leaders about the impending forcible encroachment of their lands.

Mr Chakma was one of the four Jummas whose houses came under attack on 9 August for speaking to the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission. The settlers beat him severely during the attack.

On 28 August, he was present at a press conference in Dhaka in which he and other victims demanded immediate withdrawal of the settlers from Sajek.

## **One kidnapped in Subholong**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 160/2008, October 25, 2008*

**ONE person has been kidnapped by armed terrorists in Subholong Union of Barkal Thana in Rangamati district.**

Joyonto Sen Chakma, aged 55, also known as Bhorot Boidyo s/o Kalachand Chakma was kidnapped from a place called Narkel Bagan at around 4 pm yesterday, 24 October, when he was returning from Subholong bazaar. He is from South Ukchari village.

Quoting eyewitnesses, a human rights activist in Rangamati town told chtnews.com on condition that his name be not mentioned in this report for security concerns that the terrorists had asked Joyonto Sen his name, and when he had told them his name, they took him away at gun point.

"I have been told that the armed terrorists led him away towards Billochara" he further said and added that they are patronized by a powerful member of the Regional Council in Rangamati.

The victim is a traditional village healer, locally known as Boidyo. The reason for his kidnapping could not be known.

## **Registration of CHT regional parties with EC uncertain**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 161/2008, October 27, 2008*

**THE hope for the two regional political parties of the Chittagong Hill Tracts to participate in the upcoming elections following the Election Commission's**

## **registration process has come to an end, writes Fazle Elahi in the Suprabhat Bangladesh, a Bengali daily published from Chittagong.**

In the news article published today, 27 October, Mr. Elahi attributed this fate of the CHT regional parties to the absence of provision for registration of any regional political party in the EC-announced registration process.

"Yet, the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) and Parbattya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (JSS) have applied for registration with the EC," he said and added that the Commission has yet to make any comments about their application.

"The complication with regard to registration has led to resentment among the leaders and workers of these two parties." he said.

The report said Ujjal Smriti Chakma, a central committee member of the UPDF, had admitted that his party has applied for registration and quoted him as saying "we have applied after fulfilling all the necessary conditions, but if the EC refuses to register us, then that would be a grave mistake on its part."

"Mr. Chakma said the EC has not made any specific provision for the registration of the regional parties, and added that the EC is making a mistake similar to the one made by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman." Mr. Elahi's report said.

"He went on to warn the EC, saying the EC must bear the responsibility if any untoward consequences result in the future because of their mistakes. This is a deep conspiracy to keep the Jumma people away from democratic process." the report further said.

The report said the CHT people are worried about the fallout of a possible denial of the EC to register the two powerful regional political parties -- UPDF and JSS. "This has become a subject of discussion everywhere in CHT." it added.

The reporter said he had contacted couple of JSS leaders for comments but they declined, saying they had instruction not to say anything about it.

The report also said that the so-called Sama Adhikar Andolon, a platform of a section of the Bengali settlers in CHT, has not applied for registration because they do not consider their organisation to be a political one.

## **Army camp grabs 20 acres, evicts 3 families in Harinathpara**

[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com)

*News No. 162/2008, October 28, 2008*

**Three Jumma families have been displaced in Harinathpara under Golabari Union of Khagrachari district after an army camp was built there in April 2007.**

The camp was relocated from Jadurampara in Kamalchari to Jonglitila situated in the middle of two villages Harinathpara and Guamahat. The army ousted three Jumma families who had been living there for many years and forcibly occupied about 20 acres of land belonging to six Jummas, including those evicted.

The soldiers also destroyed their orchards and fruit trees, and cut down bamboos and other valuable trees like teak and Gamar.

The displaced have been identified as Karunamoy Chakma, aged 55, s/o Nagor Chakma, Shantimoy Chakma, aged 35, s/o Chiringya Chakma and Charu Bikash Chakma, aged 35, s/o Shobhadhan Chakma.

**Karunamoy Chakma** told chtnews.com that after returning from refugee camp in Tripura, India in 1997, his family had settled there with permission from the local headman, Aungkyoching Chowdhury. He had grown different kinds of fruit trees such as jackfruit, mango, litchi, orange and plum, and planted bamboo, teak and Gamar tree.

He said until he was evicted in 2007, his family had been living there without any trouble and hindrance. "I had 5 acres of land there. Now the army is using it as a helipad." he said.

Now he has built a house on a piece of land belonging to Satish Chandra Chakma in the same village.

He said "I appealed to the CO. He said 'since you are returnee refugee we will give you money' (as compensation). I don't know the CO's name. He said the land belonged to the government. I went to him couple of times. At one stage, he called me names and said 'you bastard! You will smile the other side of your face, you know, if I have you lathi-charged (caned).' Finally, I gave up on it, and asked for seven days for the house to be dismantled and shifted. He gave me five days. Now I have become completely landless, not even owning an inch of land. I have got three sons and three daughters."

Like him, **Charu Bikash Chakma** was also forcibly ousted from his land. His family has now moved to Akkoychara Adam, about one and a half miles from Harinathpara village.

Those interviewed said the land on which the main camp-house has been built belongs to Charu Bikash Chakma and his father. They had two houses there, but they were destroyed.

**Shantimoy Chakma** alleged that the army has occupied 5 acres of third class hilly land belonging to him. He had been in the possession of the land for the last 35 years.

In an interview with the chtnews.com on 10 September 2008, Mr. Chakma said "I grew teak, Gamar and banana plantation there. About one and a half months ago, an army officer from the newly built Jonglitila camp called me and said that all my land was now under the control of the army camp. He virtually told me that his camp belonged all the



land that he 'surveyed in all directions'. Ten to 12 days ago, the army got the settlers to clear the area. I had some 2nd class land within these 5 acres, and I used to grow vegetables there; but I am not being allowed to do that in this season."

**Satish Chandra Chakma**, aged 55, s/o Nishi Kumar Chakma had two acres of third class hilly land and 15 decimal of second class land. He and his family had been living there for 50 years. Apart from bamboo, they had also grown teak, Gamar, coconut, jackfruit, orange and lemon trees. Now the whole land has been occupied by the army.

In an interview he said "I appealed to the Chairman (UP) and the Headman, but nothing came out. The army cut down the trees, and then trucks load of wood logs were supplied to the Zone, but we had to watch it helplessly. When we tried to protest, they threatened us."

His brother **Tarun Kanti Chakma's** (36) 3 acres of land has also been occupied. "The army cut down about 100 banana trees and 50 pieces of *Bajjey* bamboo. I had over 100 teak and Gamar trees, which were 12 to 14 years old. Now they don't allow me to sell them away. Everything has gone." Mr. Chakma alleged.

Asked if he lodged any protest or sought redress, he said "From whom shall I seek justice? The army said 'you can go anywhere, even to our higher authority, to lodge a complaint, but we need this area.'"

A few days ago, his wife was taking a banana bunch from their orchard. But when the soldiers objected, she, out of anger and grief, cut it to pieces in front of the army men and walked away.

The army also grabbed about 2 acres of land belonging to **Nayan Chakma**, 35, s/o Joy Dharat Chakma. He had grown about 500 pieces of teak trees. He said "the army cut down the teak trees and built their camp with these trees. Some of logs from these trees are still kept in the camp. My land is situated to the west of the main camp."

Asked if he lodged a protest, Nayana said "What could we have done! They just came and cut down the trees in a swift manner. We asked for compensation but they refused to pay, and said all our lands would be put under the control of the camp. We were forced to break down our houses. Now I built my house anew near the old one. They (army) are kept silent about it, but I don't know how long we would be allowed to live here. A few days ago, Major Rabbi told us not to plant anything or to make fire in our own land."

## **Army-police cordon off UPDF office in Naniachar**

[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com)

News No. 163/2008, November 8, 2008

**A joint force of army and police personnel cordoned off the office of the Naniachar branch of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) yesterday, 7 November, a day after it was opened for the first time in nearly two years.**

Like all other political parties of the country, the UPDF also closed down its offices after the promulgation of the state of emergency on 11 January last year suspending all kinds of political activities.

After the announcement of polls schedule on 2 November, the caretaker government relaxed the emergency rules, allowing the parties the freedom to conduct election related activities. A few months earlier the government had withdrawn a ban on indoor politics.

In the morning of 6 November, the UPDF members and supporters opened their office in Naniachar Thana under Rangamati district. At 12 noon, two security intelligence personnel visited the office, but they did not speak to any one. "They stayed a few minutes at the office and then left" said a UPDF member from Rangamati.

The following day, i.e., 7 November, around 7am a joint force of army and police personnel came to the office in three pick-up vans and cordoned it off until 5pm.

The soldiers asked the people, present at the nearby tea shops, who had opened the office the day before.

The soldiers also told them that they had information that there would be a meeting at the office.

Sachib Chakma, a central committee member of the UPDF, confirmed the incident and said "the way the army and police cordoned off our office is a clear violation of our democratic rights."

"This is a tactic of intimidation and coercion, and they did it so that we are not able to participate in the polls freely and openly." he added.

## **UPDF terms EC 'biased' in party registration**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 164/2008, November 8, 2008*

**The United People's Democratic Front on Friday accused the Election Commission of showing 'discriminatory and biased' attitude in the registration of political parties, says the New Age, an English national daily in Bangladesh.**

Full excerpt of the New Age report is as follows:

### **UPDF terms EC 'biased' in party registration**

**Staff Correspondent**

The United People's Democratic Front on Friday accused the Election Commission of showing 'discriminatory and biased' attitude in the registration of political parties.

Condemning the commission's decision not to register the UPDF as a political party, the party's president Prasit Bikash Khisha, in a statement signed by Angya Marma, the office and public relation secretary of the party, termed 'unacceptable and illogical' the reasons the commission showed for not registering it.

'It is very unfortunate the commission refused to register democratic and progressive parties such as the United People's Democratic Front whereas it registered parties like Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami which acted against the country's independence in 1971, amid strong opposition,' the statement said.

Prasit Bikash asked the chief election commissioner to reconsider registering it as a political party.

<http://www.newagebd.com/2008/nov/08/nat.html>

## **PCP Naniachar office standoff: army picks up 10 PCP and HWF members**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 165/2008, November 8, 2008*

**In a latest development today, the army picked up five members of the Hill Students Council (PCP) including the president of its Naniachar branch, Bilash Chakma, and another five Hill Women's Federation members from their office at T & T area in Rangamati district.**

However, they were released later after "interrogation". PCP and HWF sources in Naniachar told chtnews.com that a group of army personnel led by Adjutant Nazmul from Naniachar zone (1 EBR) came to the PCP and HWF office at around noon and took the PCP and HWF members to the zone headquarters.

At the zone, they were interrogated by captain Morshalin. In reply to his questions, the PCP Naniachar unit president told him that they had closed down the office after the declaration of the state of emergency last year.

"The army officer said they will not allow us to open the office without permission from the TNO (Thana Nirbahi Officer)." one of the PCP men present at the interrogation told chtnews.com.

Captain Morshalin also asked them to appear before the zone headquarters with identity cards and meet with the Commanding Officer (CO) tomorrow.

The other PCP members that were picked up included Bablu Chakma, Organising Secretary; Bignabinashon Chakma, Assistant General Secretary; Tapu Moni Chakma, member; Kalo Moni Chakma, member.

The HWF members taken to the zone headquarters along with them are Aruna Chakma, Kemie Chakma, Bipasha Chakma, Rupashi Chakma and Api Chakma.

### **PCP condemns**

The Hill Student's Council President, Ricoh Chakma, and General Secretary, Aungya Marma, in a statement condemned what they called "the autocratic and undemocratic attitudes" of the army.

## **UPDF member arrested in Sajek**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 166/2008, November 9, 2008*

**A member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) was arrested in Sajek under Rangamati district on 7 November.**

Sources said Motor Chakma, aged 33, s/o Budu Chakma (mother's name Erebu Chakma) of village Balukhali under Bongoltoli Union of Baghaichari Thana was arrested from the house of one of his relatives in the village of Egojyachari in Sajek.

A group of army personnel from Majolong camp raided the village at around 4:30pm and arrested him.

Mr. Chakma, an active member of the UPDF, is believed to have been there on a family business. He has not been handed over to the police till the writing of this report at 3pm today.

No further details are available.

## **Denial of Registration: UPDF sends legal notice to EC**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 167/2008, November 9, 2008*

**THE United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) on Sunday, November 09, sent a legal notice to the Chief Election Commissioner, A T M Shamsul Haq, urging him to inform the party by 2pm today whether the EC would "cancel, withdraw or rescind" its decision of 2. 11. 2008 not to register the UPDF as a political party.**

The notice has been sent on behalf of the UPDF President, Mr. Prasit Khisha, by Advocate Md. Shariful Haq from Hazlul Karim and Associates.

It said " the said decision dated 2.11.2008 of the Election Commission not to register the UPDF as a political party is ultra vires of the Political Parties Registration Rules, in particular Rule 7(5) which specifically provides that the Commission shall give any applicant party an opportunity of fifteen days to correct any errors in its application and to supply the necessary documents in support of such application."

It also contended that " the said decision dated 2.11.2008 of the Election Commission is without lawful authority and of no legal effect inasmuch as it is wholly arbitrary and in violation of the principles of natural justice."

The press release was signed by Aongay Marama, Publication and Public Relations Department of the UPDF.

## **Terrorist threat to close down UPDF office**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 168/2008, November 18, 2008*

### **Armed terrorists have threatened United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) to close down its office at Ghagra under Rangamati district.**

UPDF's Rangamati Unit leaders said they had opened an office Chowmuhani area of Ghagra on 14 November for the purpose of conducting election campaign. But since then, some terrorists led by Dharendra, Joymni and Hiro have been threatening them to close it down, they alleged.

On 15 November, the terrorists attempted to kidnap Lakshman Sen Chakma (60), the owner of the house UPDF has rented for its office, from Janumachara village, Ghagra. The terrorists have been threatening him to revoke the deal and oust UPDF from the office.

UPDF leaders alleged that the army was providing full support to the terrorists. On 17 November, around 11:30am, Dharendra and his terrorist gangsters raided the office. They were in provocative mood, and they forced the UPDF members and supporters present there to leave the office immediately.

"Some intelligence personnel including Md. Golap were along with the terrorists. In fact, they came to the office together." alleged Pulak Chakma from Kawkhali. The incident took place in front of the army, he said and added: "We will inform the police about it and would like to see if the government is sincere enough to hold a free and fair election in the CHT."

He further said the terrorist gang is patronized by a powerful leader of a regional party with its headquarter based in Rangamati.

## **Army orders to close down UPDF office in Kawkhali**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 169/2008, November 18, 2008*

### **Army personnel have ordered the UPDF to close down its Kawkhali unit office under Rangamati district.**

Sources said a group of army personnel from Kawkhali Sadar camp today, around 12:30 pm, broke into the UPDF office and turn it upside down. No UPDF members and supporters were present at the office at the time.

UPDF members reopened the office yesterday after the government withdrawn ban on political activities.

The soldiers interrogated the Jummas present at the tea shops nearby the office and threatened burn it down.

They also asked them to tell the UPDF to close down the office, situated near the house of Mrs. Massipru Marma.

## **Midnight raid into UPDF office in Kawkhali**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 170/2008, November 19, 2008*

### **Army personnel broke into the Kawkhali unit office of the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) around midnight last night, sources in UPDF said.**

The incident comes about 11 hours after they ordered the party to close down the office, which was reopened on 17 November, after the government had withdrawn a ban on political activities.

The soldiers have reportedly removed the office furniture. No further details are available.

Meanwhile, sources from Rangamati said a terrorist group had kept pressuring Lakshman Sen Chakma (60) to revoke a deal over the use of his house as an office by UPDF in Ghagra.

Yesterday, they called the village elders to their den and threatened them not to allow UPDF to carry out its activities in Ghagra.

“We are giving you the last warning – either you cancel the deal (over the UPDF office), or we will take actions against all of you”, one of the villagers who attended the meeting quoted the terrorists as saying.

## **UPDF office keeper arrested in Kawkhali**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 171/2008, November 26, 2008*

**An office keeper of the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) has been arrested in Kawkhali under Rangamati district.**

Sachib Chakma, central committee member of the UPDF, told chtnews.com that at around 8:30am a group of army personnel from Talukderpara camp came to the UPDF office in a pick-up van and took away Onyon Talukder (28) s/o Gobinda Talukder.

Talukder is responsible for maintaining the office which was reopened on 17 November.

The soldiers took him to the camp and subjected him to torture and intense interrogation. Later on, he was taken to Panchari village where the army made a few more arrests of innocent Jumma people, another source said without giving further details.

## **Ten Jummas hurt in settler attack in Mahalchari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 172/2008, November 28, 2008*

**At least ten Jummas were injured in a settler attack in Mahalchari under Khagrachari district yesterday, 27 November.**

Sources from Khagrachari said the attack took place at around 3:30 pm near Mahalchari Police station when the Jummas were on their way to participate in a funeral in the village of Tholipara. The settlers were led by Jasim Uddin from Chongrachari cluster village and were armed with stick and dao (a kind of knife).

Four of the injured were admitted to Khagrachari hospital. Their condition has been stated to be critical.

The incident is a sequel to a series of other incidents. On 24 November, settlers led by Jasim Uddin, a fish trader, caught two UPDF supporters – Tissu Chakma (18) of village Bodanala and Tikon Tripura (18) from Sinkukchari -- and handed them over to the army. This created resentment among the Jumma villagers, who decided not to allow them to fish in their area.

Yesterday, at around 1pm when a group of settler fishermen went there to catch fish the Jumma villagers told them that they would not allow them to fish until the arrested UPDF supporters were set free. A heated altercation took place between the two sides, leading to a minor scuffle.

After coming back, the settlers incited their fellow brothers and attacked the Jummas near the police station without slightest provocation. These Jummas were not in any way involved in the previous incidents.

The Jummas tried to resist the attack but with little success. The police intervened only after the attack was over. Army personnel were also deployed later on.

At least ten Jummas were reported to have been injured in the premeditated attack. Four of them were admitted to Khagrachari hospital. They have been identified as Uhapru Marma(42) son of Ushapru Marma of village Mahamunipara, Chinginala, Mahalchari; Kamol Marma (25) son of Ushapru Marma of Village Mahamunipara, Chinginala, Mahalchari; Mrs. Shuimrasang Marma(60) wife of Mr. Lailapru Marma of Village Khaiyongsa para; and Kangja aung Marma(34) son of Mr. Chailapru Marma of Village Khaiyangsa para. Mr. Kangja aung Marma is an employee (Bloc Supervisor) of Agriculture institute.

A few settlers also reportedly sustained minor injuries, but their identity was not revealed fearing criminal actions. None of the attackers has so far been arrested.

## High court issues rule on EC over non-registration of UPDF

[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com)

News No. 173/2008, December 03, 2008

**The High Court yesterday issued a rule on the Election Commission to show cause as to why the decision not to register United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) as a political party should not be declared to have been taken without lawful authority and is of no legal effect.**

A high court bench comprising justice Said Mahmud Hossain and justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui gave the order after Rabi Shankar Chakma, General Secretary of the UPDF, filed a writ petition against the EC decision. The court gave the respondents two weeks to reply.

Advocate Md. Iddrishur Rahman, Barrister Sarah Hossain, Advocate Pratikar Chakma and Advocate Md. Shahidullah moved the writ petition in the high court.

The respondents of the case are 1. The Election Commission for Bangladesh, Election Commission Secretariat, Shere-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka; 2. The Election Commission Secretariat, represented by its Secretariat, Election Commission Secretariat, Shere-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka represented Shere-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka; 3. Deputy Director (Administration) of the Election Commission, Election Commission Secretariat, Shere Bangla Nagar, Dhaka; 4. Senior Assistant Secretary (Proshashon- 3), Election Commission Secretariat, Shere-Bnagla Nagar, Dhaka; 5. District Election Officer, Khagrachari Hill District; and 6. The Deputy Commissioner, Khagrachari.

On 20 October, the United People's Democratic Front submitted an application to the Election Commission Secretariat for obtaining registration as a political party. However, on 2 November, in an arbitrary manner and without giving UPDF the legally mandated opportunity to be heard, the EC took a decision not to grant UPDF registration, and in a letter wrote to the UPDF that "the Election Commission has decided that the United



Peoples Democratic Party (sic) is not eligible for registration because it has failed to fulfill the conditions for registration as set by the Political Parties Registration Rules, 2008.”

On 30 November, UPDF filed the writ petition against the said decision of the EC contending that it is ultra vires of the provisions of the Political Parties Registration Rules, 2008 and violates the principles of natural justice.

According to section 7(5) of the Political Parties Registration Rules, 2008, the EC is legally bound to give the applicant a fifteen-day’s opportunity if the application is not submitted along with adequate documents and information.

The EC refused to give this opportunity to the UPDF and turned down the application in a manner described in the writ petition as arbitrary.

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[chtnews.com](http://chtnews.com) is an independent and voluntary online news service dedicated to projecting and analyzing the current events in the Chittagong Hill Tracts from the perspective of the Jumma people's struggle for the right to self-determination. For further information please contact at: [chtnewsonline@gmail.com](mailto:chtnewsonline@gmail.com)